

*International Activities
Report for the year 2008*



*Prepared by the Government and Public Affairs
International Relations Section*

Acknowledgment

The Government and Public Affairs International Relations Section (IR) thanks the many people that made this report possible. Contributions from TxDOT, relevant agencies outside TxDOT and our many international visitors and contacts are truly at the core of this report. It is our hope that this report reflects adequately the volume, breadth and scope of their contributions to the international activities of TxDOT.

**2008 Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)
International Activities Report
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Executive Summary

This report reflects the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) international activities for the calendar year 2008. Given the ever-increasing effects of expanded international trade and its impact on the economy, transportation infrastructure and environment, TxDOT's involvement in international activities continues to grow. In addition, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has accelerated and grown the number of TxDOT's bi-national and multinational connections.

Texas' expansive border with Mexico, one of the United States' most significant trade partners and also a significant conduit for Asian imports arriving to the United States via Mexico, requires focused communication and collaborative planning.

The Government and Public Affairs International Relations (IR) section is responsible as first contact for TxDOT for international interests. However many other entities within TxDOT also contribute to TxDOT's international relationships. The three border districts, El Paso, Laredo and Pharr, play critical roles in planning with Mexico. The Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority (ABTPA) also interfaces with Mexican law enforcement on an ongoing basis.

Many divisions of TxDOT receive visitors from around the world and share expertise with said visitors. Transportation and political figures from around the world seek to meet with TxDOT's personnel to glean important information about transportation planning and administration in Texas.

Countries around the world also visit and inquire with TxDOT's Travel division about the 'Don't Mess with Texas' program. The Research Technology Implementation Office also interacts with international transportation professionals exchanging world transportation research.

Ultimately, this report will detail each of TxDOT's divisions, districts or offices that carry out international activities of one sort or another. It will further contain a list of committees of relevance and an appendix of other data of interest.

Structure of Report

This report is divided into three major sections delineating the international activities in which TxDOT is involved. Section One contains detailed descriptions of the activities of each division, district or office. Section Two contains information about meetings and conferences and lastly, Section Three represents an appendix of relevant facts and information.

This report represents a composite of input from districts, divisions and offices as well as from relevant external sources. We also receive data directly from other organizations, such as: the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the U.S. State Department (USDOS), the Texas Secretary of State, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), Department of Homeland Security and the U.S.-Mexico Joint Working Committee (JWC).

Additional information on most of the activities included in this report can be obtained from the IR at (512) 374-5345 or by fax at (512) 374-5325.

This report may also be found in English and Spanish at: http://www.txdot.gov/txdot_library/publications/government/international_relations.htm.

SECTION I
ACTIVITY SUMMARIES BY TxDOT ENTITY

Texas and International Trade - Intimate Partners

The fact that trade has been moving across the globe since the Silk Road and before is certainly true. Nonetheless, a dramatic shift in the fluidity of global movements occurred during this century resulting from improved transportation infrastructure and modes of transport. Who would have imagined even in 1930 that a person in Austin could eat fruit harvested in Chile so readily? Hence today Texas, the leader in export revenue for the last seven years, stands strongly at the vanguard of global trade. Further, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Texas remains the top-ranked global destination for foreign direct investment.

Given the aforementioned, it is not difficult to extrapolate that Texas, to continue to grow and profit from its fortuitous position, should be strongly focused on the further development of infrastructure and multi-modal transportation.

To support TxDOT in its planning processes, more and more impacted by the effects of international trade, the IR is positioned to pursue information about important trade partners, best practices and important changing global trading trends. At the time of writing this report, top trading partners include: Canada, Mexico, China, Japan, Germany, UK, Netherlands, Korea, Brazil and France, closely followed by Belgium and Singapore.

MEXICO Importance of the Border Area

Early in 2009, Texas Secretary of State Andrade issued the Border Commerce Coordinator report. Secretary Andrade made a compelling argument for the importance of the Border Area. She stated: *The border region plays an important role in efforts to foster a superior business climate in Texas. Texas and Mexico are united by a shared goal of economic success and the benefit that this success ultimately brings to the collective region. Continuing to promote commerce, opportunity and prosperity along the border enhances and secures Texas' sustained position as an economic leader.*

Mexico still remains one of the United States' most important trading partners as indicated by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) of the U.S. Department of Transportation: Surface transportation trade between the United States and its North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) partners Canada and Mexico was 4.1 percent higher in 2008 than in 2007, reaching \$830 billion. In 2008, northbound Texas border crossings totaled 3.26 million commercial crossings, 108.9 thousand bus crossings, 41.6 million private vehicle crossings and 19 million pedestrian crossings. TxDOT needs must play an important role in expediting the flow of commerce and traffic between Mexico and the United States and continues to be strongly committed to the development of transportation infrastructure in this critical area.

Various recent projects to address border development include the Border Transportation Improvement Program (\$2.6 billion), and the Border Safety Inspection Facility Program (\$106 million) in addition to the Regional Border Master Plans that are targeted to be carried out in 2009.

Government and Public Affairs International Relations Section (IR)

TxDOT's International Relations Office (IRO) was initially created in 1994, as a response to the changes NAFTA would bring to Texas. Thirteen years later, late in 2007, with the objective of assuring that national and international communications from TxDOT be consistent and centralized, IRO was merged with the Government and Public Affairs Division under the slightly changed name of the International Relations Section (IR).

In an effort to facilitate a stronger understanding of the impact of global trade on Texas and the U.S., the IR is currently shifting the scope of its work. Although still evolving, the intent of such a shift is to create a knowledge repository within TxDOT that would provide key information about international trade trends, and global best practices.

Currently, the IR coordinates functions, operations and information relating to international activities for TxDOT. The IR performs facilitative, liaison and research functions and carries out the following actions:

- Facilitate coordinated planning, most specifically at the U.S.-Mexico border, to maximize the value of transportation assets and reduce congestion.
- Provide assistance with translation and protocols relevant to international visitors.
- Maintain information and contact with NAFTA partners on the U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Canada borders, which supports expanding economic opportunity.
- Facilitate cross-border technical exchange with Mexican Border States and the Secretariat of Communication and Transportation (SCT) to improve the safe and efficient flow of traffic across the Rio Grande. Such efforts serve to enhance safety and eventually improve air quality.
- Share technical expertise with international counterparts. With Mexico, this task is largely carried out by means of the Border Technology Exchange Program (BTEP).

In support of the above mentioned actions, the IR currently performs, amongst others, the following tasks:

- Participating in the US-Mexico Bi-National Bridges and Borders Group, the Border Governors' Conference Logistics and International Crossings work table and the US-Mexico Joint Working Committee (JWC) for transportation planning.
- Serving as the TxDOT contact on international activities.
- Providing recommendations and support to administration on proposed legislation, policies, procedures and actions regarding international trade and the border.
- Representing TxDOT as the voice for international issues with other State agencies, such as the Secretary of State, Governors Office, FHWA, and interested groups.
- Tracking commercial, private vehicle and pedestrian movements at the Tx-Mexico border.
- Assisting TxDOT in the development, implementation, coordination and monitoring of strategic and operational plans pertaining to international and border activities.
- Tracking information pertaining to international bridges and crossings in Texas

Once the modified scope of work is in place, the IR should carry out the following:

- Provide relevant information to TxDOT regarding international transportation issues.
- Heighten TxDOT's awareness of international trade trends and best practices, and the impact of these on the United States and Texas specifically.
- Identify and maintain awareness of the world's fast emerging markets
- Define which global supply chains are pressuring existing transportation assets, as well as how these interact with national transportation infrastructure and border-crossing systems.

In support of these responsibilities, the office publishes the following reports:

- the *Texas-Mexico International Bridges & Border Crossings: Existing & Proposed*
- *International Activities Report*

Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority



The ABTPA was created in 1991 by state legislators to reduce auto theft in the State of Texas. The Board of Directors of ABTPA consists of seven persons, designated by the governor, who represent law enforcement, consumers, insurance companies, and DPS (DPS).

The ABTPA worked in collaboration with Mexico to reduce the number of vehicles that are stolen and transported across both sides of the border.



The ABTPA auto theft task forces located in cities along the border have become a part of the Governor's Border Star Program. The task forces have teamed with DPS, Border Patrol, Customs and other law enforcement agencies check inbound and outbound crossings situations and delays along the Texas border entries for possible illegal activity.

During 2008, the ABTPA continued to promote their public awareness campaign called "You Hold the Key." It was created based on the fact that about half of the nearly 100,000 cars stolen last year in Texas had the drivers' keys left in them! The ABTPA wants vehicle owners to understand that leaving their keys in the car could make them an unsuspecting accomplice in a potentially very serious crime. Stolen cars are often connected to the smuggling of drugs and humans as well as the purchase and sale of weapons.

The Border Auto Theft Information Center (BATIC) is part of the Texas Department of Public Safety's Motor Vehicle Theft Service in El Paso, Texas. Funding for this center has been provided the Texas Auto Theft Prevention Authority. It has been officially serving law enforcement agencies since 1994. The BATIC Center assists law enforcement officers from Mexico and US, Canada, Central America, Puerto Rico and Jamaica. The center enables law enforcement action upon the recovery and possible prosecution of auto thieves along border areas of the United States and Mexico.

ABTPA creates a forum for operational oversight of the anti-theft program and administration of funding to reduce vehicle theft in Texas. The program is working effectively; the motor vehicle theft rate (number of stolen vehicles per 100,000 registered vehicles) has been reduced by 59% since 1991. The 2007 recovery rate for vehicles was 74%.

Border Safety Inspection Facilities (BSIF)



Texas Senate Bill 913, 76th Legislature (1999), directed TxDOT to select locations for border safety inspection facilities along major highways at or near border crossings with Mexico in Brownsville, Laredo and El Paso thereby allowing federal, state and municipal agencies that regulate the passage of commercial vehicles crossing the border to be located in one place.

The Texas DPS and TxDOT were responsible for site selection and possible acquisition of right-of-way for the Border Safety Inspection Facilities (BSIFs) and weigh stations near the existing federal inspection stations.

There are currently temporary operational BSIFs located at:

- World Trade International Bridge, Laredo
- Colombia-Solidarity International Bridge, Laredo
- Camino Real International Bridge, Eagle Pass
- Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge, Pharr
- Veterans International Bridge at Los Tomates, Brownsville
- Free Trade Bridge at Los Indios, Brownsville

Each of the facilities provides an efficient method of inspecting and weighing commercial vehicles entering the United States at the Texas-Mexico border.

During 2008, two permanent facilities were completed and are now operational. They are located at:

- Bridge of the Americas, El Paso
- Zaragoza-Ysleta Bridge, El Paso

Border Technology Exchange Program (BTEP)



On April 29, 1994, the U.S. and Mexican Secretaries of Transportation signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that recognized the desire of both countries to improve the coordination and quality of land transportation systems in the border region.

As a result, the US-Mexico Joint Working Committee was created, and BTEP, under its auspices, became one of several vehicles for the two countries to carry out their coordination efforts. The program in Texas is funded by the FHWA, and TxDOT.

The BTEP program directly supports TxDOT's goal of increasing transportation safety by the mutual sharing of expertise with Mexico.

Attending conferences such as the ATSSA (American Traffic Safety Services Association), permits our Mexican counterparts to see firsthand the most innovative safety equipment used in the United States. Visits from Mexican state and federal transportation engineers to TxDOT construction sites, gives them the opportunity to observe the safety tools used in road construction.

The Texas BTEP promotes five central objectives:

- Improving safe and efficient trans-border transportation systems in the border region.
- Sharing planning information, standards and specifications.
- Enhancing professional and technical capabilities.
- Increasing institutional, technical and legal compatibility and understanding.
- Institutionalizing the technology exchange process.

Texas works closely with its Mexican border state counterparts to exchange infrastructure planning information, to identify each state's technical needs and to establish positive, open communications. In an effort to further the exchange of information, Technology Transfer Centers (T2) have been established in Chihuahua, Nuevo León, Tamaulipas and Coahuila. Training courses and activities such as official visits, planning meetings, technical exchanges, conferences and workshops on transportation-related topics have been implemented.

The entities that participate in BTEP include: TxDOT, the FHWA, the DOTs of California, Arizona and New Mexico, the Mexican Transportation Institute, the SCT state offices along the border, the Mexican states of Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León and Tamaulipas, Mexican Universities within the six Mexican states. BTEP programs have been established over the last year in some U.S. states along the border with Canada.

TxDOT divisions and districts make valuable contributions to the BTEP program. The Transportation Planning and Programming, Bridge, Maintenance, Design and Construction Divisions, and the Laredo, El Paso and Pharr Districts regularly exchange technological information through the BTEP program.

To coordinate the BTEP related work of TxDOT districts, divisions and offices, the IR develops an annual state plan compatible with the BTEP border wide bi-national strategic plan. This year, the BTEP program sponsored some 6 learning exchanges between Mexico and the state of Texas.

Noteworthy this year was a visit by transportation officials from the state of Coahuila. The trip culminated with the guests visiting with officials from the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) in College Station with whom they contracted to build a ground radar penetration vehicle. This new approach, facilitated by the exchange of technology, will enhance maintenance practices in Coahuila and will in turn increase transportation safety.

International Visitors/Inquiries



The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Public Works of Kuwait, with TxDOT's Executive Director

The IR is responsible, as the first point of contact, for coordinating and welcoming TxDOT's international visitors, arranging meetings and presentations, and assuring that protocols are followed. In addition, in preparation for receiving the visitors, the IR provides briefings to TxDOT personnel, highlighting relevant information and cultural considerations related to the visiting country. Visitors are from both private and public sectors, and generally last 1 to 2 days.

The department also receives international visitors, often engineers or engineering students, for more extended periods. The sharing of transportation related techniques and methods, whether through short visits, longer visits or the simple exchange of transportation information, is clearly beneficial. As trade moves more and more fluidly between the U.S. and Mexico, this exchange of information is becoming increasingly important to ongoing planning, problem-solving and development of infrastructure along the Mexico-Texas border and corridors for moving trade into and throughout the United States.

This year marked a record year for interested visitors to TxDOT. Visitors show an interest in formal, non-binding arrangements to exchange expertise, as well as visiting in a more informal mode. The IR's role in supporting linkages with foreign counterparts contributes to TxDOT's goal of expanding economic opportunity. For example, the Chinese province of Shanxi and TxDOT entered into a cooperative agreement between the two entities early in 2008. It is hoped that these information exchanges will enhance the lives and safety of Texans and people around the globe.

TxDOT continues to host individual visitors interested in various aspects of the transportation industry; during the past year, a total of 40 visitors came to TxDOT, bringing the total visitors hosted since 1994 to 1,745. This year, as a result of an effort by the FHWA to provide support to the Ministry of Public Works in Kuwait, TxDOT entered into a cooperative agreement for the exchange of information. Shortly thereafter, the Belgian Ambassador to the United States met with TxDOT staff and Executive Director to discuss maximizing the use of roadways and public transportation to decrease congestion. Another interesting visit was that of two reporters and a television cameraman from Kosovo. This country had just recently declared its independence, and came to TxDOT to film a program about TxDOT's Don't Mess with Texas campaign, in the hopes that this program could contribute to Kosovo citizens becoming more aware of keeping their country clean. Many more visits occurred, each providing a rich experience about TxDOT's advanced technologies and skills at the business of transportation.



Visitors from Kosovo



Reporter from Kosovo learning about
'Don't Mess with Texas' campaign



Belgian Ambassador Struye de Sveiland, Amadeo Saenz
and Jennifer Moczygemba (TxDOT)



Visitors from South Africa

TxDOT's visitors have come from all over the world: Algeria, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Egypt, England, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Jordan, India, Indonesia, Italy, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Mexico, Mongolia, the Netherlands, New Guinea, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Viet Nam and Venezuela.



Jasem Fakhra - MPW/FHWA Liaison Engineer,
Agustín De La Rosa, John Barton, both from TxDOT,
and the Kuwaiti Undersecretary



Visitors from Japan

The IR also receives and responds to numerous inquiries from groups and individuals seeking information about commerce, international protocols, licensing, insurance, titling and research issues.

Districts/Divisions/Offices Activities

The Pharr, Laredo and El Paso Districts have long histories of cooperation with transportation officials in the neighboring Mexican states. All three districts have made extensive efforts to develop close productive working relationships with their neighbors.

One example of the districts' focus on increased efficiencies is found in the Border Travel Time Study which identifies low-cost improvements on the state system and local roadways on the Texas side leading to and from the 26 Texas-Mexico international border crossings for both commercial trucks and privately owned vehicles. Extensive stakeholder input went into this project. TxDOT received the final information during the summer 2008 and the districts are currently evaluating the implementation of improvements. Detailed information is available on the TxDOT web site at: http://www.txdot.gov/services/transportation_planning_and_programming/border_crossings_study/default.htm.

Additionally during 2009, the Regional Border Master Planning projects should get underway, providing a basis for consistent planning approaches throughout the border areas.

Border Wait Time Measurements projects by TxDOT and FHWA are also being conducted in El Paso and Pharr for ongoing measurement of the travel time and wait time of commercial vehicles crossing the border using Radio Frequency (RFID) technology.



Diagram for Border Wait time Study in Pharr

El Paso (ELP)



Americas Overpass

The El Paso district continues to work to enhance the flow of traffic in this important border area. To manage traffic more efficiently, traffic counters at all international crossings have been constructed. Additionally cameras were installed along LP 375 (Cesar Chavez Highway) that will link to the city of El Paso's Traffic Management Center. The City of El Paso continues coordinating the efforts with U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) regarding access issues into Paso del Norte Bridge, with the intention of bettering the flow of traffic across the border. The district worked in 2008 on the development and construction of BSIFs that allow for speedy inspection of trucks crossing local international bridges. Both the BOTA and the Zaragoza facilities are currently complete and DPS is operating within the facilities.



El Paso Transvista

El Paso area Ports of Entry were selected as Texas sites to test innovative Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). These systems are intended to make border crossings more efficient. Initial work was carried out by the Texas Transportation Institute in 2004. The second phase of implementation began in 2007 and will continue in 2008 with the installation of RFID systems.

The El Paso District is also involved in various transportation related task forces and research studies dealing with issues such as traffic control, communication and environmental impacts on the border. Additionally, the district is actively involved with the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in planning for transportation improvements in the area. The Camino Real Corridor-Border Improvement Plan Study (BIP) was completed, presented and accepted by the MPO officials in early 2007. This project was carried out by the El Paso MPO and will assist in determining feasibility of new international ports of entry and their effect on air quality.

District staff is currently coordinating transportation projects with the SCT in the neighboring border state of Chihuahua.

The district actively coordinates and maintains close communication with Mexican transportation counterparts on projects of bi-national significance. District representatives participated in four two day meetings with representatives of the states of Chihuahua and Sinaloa, as well as federal agencies, on the Entrada al Pacífico Corridor. The district also participated in bi-national planning meetings for new ports of entry in El Paso, and in the regional Bi-national Bridges and Border Crossings meeting.

The El Paso District along with the TxDOT Executive Director and division staff met twice in 2008 with the Secretaries of Economic Development and Public Works from the State of Chihuahua to discuss coordination of projects and infrastructure between the two states as well as to renew a commitment to continued cooperation.

Laredo (LRD)



Milo Interchange

The Laredo District visited with a representative from the state of Tamaulipas in summer 2008, to discuss the proposed Fifth International Bridge and the new proposed International Rail Bridge crossing in south Laredo. The cities of Laredo and Nuevo Laredo, Webb County and the state of Tamaulipas intend to send a diplomatic letter to the US Department of State. The proposed letter would address the studies necessary to be performed for the connection point on both sides. Also discussed were the Railroad infrastructure need studies from Laredo to Pharr.

In late 2008, the district met with a representative of the state of Coahuila to discuss ongoing projects in Ciudad Acuña. In order to improve the commercial traffic flow and crossing times into Del Rio, right of way acquisition has begun in neighborhoods along the border. It was also learned that a new secretary of Public Works would like to visit the Laredo district and learn about the BTEP program.

There are currently six projects totaling approximately 55 million dollars underway in the district, funded through the Coordinated Border Infrastructure program.

Finally, the district worked closely in the annual effort led by the Laredo Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), in collaboration with the Mexican Consulate, on the Paisano Program help at the rest stop on IH-35. Planning meetings are coordinated by the CVB yearly for this effort to serve the needs of Mexicans traveling through Laredo on the way to Mexico for the Christmas holidays. According to reports from the Mexican Consulate, almost 4,000 people used the services at the Paisano Rest Stop. Over the course of its life, this program has served some 15,000 motorists. Officials from the Mexican Consulate and other Mexican agencies erect temporary offices at the rest-stop to assist Mexican citizens in securing necessary permits to allow them to cross the border. Rest rooms and snacks are made available to the travelers. The consulate also provided an onsite professional mechanic to help motorists with vehicle problems. TxDOT conducts courtesy patrols along the highway to help stranded motorists.

Pharr (PHR)



Harlingen U.S. 77/88 Interchange

The Pharr District has been actively involved in the Border Technology Exchange Program. The district continues to sponsor workshops, tours and visits with Mexican counterparts from Nuevo León and Tamaulipas, covering all areas of district operations. District staff members have traveled to Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, to meet with officials from the Secretaría de Desarrollo Industrial, Comercial y Turístico (SEDICOT-Ministry of Industrial, Commercial and Tourist Development) to continue with bi-national technology exchange and coordination of projects along the Texas-Mexico border.

The Pharr District has prepared a district-wide BTEP plan stressing exchange opportunities resulting from the entity's daily activities. As a direct result of this plan, the district has participated in several technology exchange workshops with Mexican Border States on topics such as Value Engineering, Asphalt Concrete Design, Bridge Scour and many other topics.

The Pharr District has performed several informal trainings in previous years for contractors that work for SCT in Mexico. These contractors have contacted the district about their desires to match their quality of roadway construction to that seen in Texas. Specific interests included asphalt concrete paving operations,

rolling patterns, compaction equipment, and hot mix plants. Visitors toured various construction projects in the Pharr District and discussed actual construction activities. Other topics shared were bridge construction and inspection, particularly concrete designs, concrete paving equipment, and testing requirements.

The District also attended bi-national workshops and meetings hosted by the local MPO. The district presented the BTEP at these meetings and explained how this program could provide training to our transportation counterparts in Tamaulipas.

The Pharr District actively participated in a Border Transportation Conference attended by numerous members of SCT and state of Tamaulipas by making presentations on several border projects.

The District attended a SCT presentation on the latest international border traffic and revenue study hosted by the Hidalgo County MPO. Ing. Juan José Erazo García Cano presented the Estudio de Trafico de la Zona Noreste de México. Once complete, the study conclusions and collected data will be an important addition to the newly initiated Regional Border Master Plan.

Several high profile roadway transportation projects funded through the Coordinated Border Infrastructure program have reached construction letting stage within the Pharr District:

- FM 511 from US 77/83 to SH 4 (Phase 1 of a commercial traffic corridor connecting to the Port of Brownsville). Approx. cost \$45M
- Los Indios International Bridge from Los Indios Bridge to FM 509 (Construction of parking lot for S. bound trucks). Approx. cost \$0.4M
- US 83 Garcia Street from FM 650 to Arroyo Roma (Constructing a one way couple for US 83 traffic in down town Roma, Texas). Approx. cost \$4M
- FM 396/Anzalduaz Connector From GSA to Bryan Road (Construct a four lane divided roadway to the new Anzalduaz Port of entry) approx. cost \$22M

The development of the Regional Border Master Plan, mentioned earlier, is also expected to benefit from this data. Border Wait Time Measurements projects by TxDOT and FHWA are being conducted in Pharr for ongoing measurement of the travel time and wait time of commercial vehicles crossing the border using Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology.



Diagram for Border Wait time Study in Pharr

Construction (CST)



The Construction division (CST) is a prime source of information for the international transportation industry. The division shares expertise and facilitates information exchange by hosting international visitors from the public and private sectors interested in materials and construction matters, pavement design, pavement management, pavement data equipment development and accelerated pavement testing. The CST also furthers technology exchange by providing information on research and design criteria and processes.

In addition, CST participates in many international conferences, committees and workshops held in the United States. For example, TxDOT is one of the sponsors of the International Conference on Accelerated Pavement Testing. This conference provides an opportunity for TxDOT personnel to share information with experts including U.S. state DOTs and university counterparts as well as representatives from European, Asian and African countries.

CST also offers technical expertise on panels at the annual Transportation Research Board meeting, which hosts over 9,000 attendees from the U.S. and many other countries. The division attends many conferences with international participation.



TxDOT's state of the art Concrete and Petrography Laboratories provide comprehensive tours of their facilities to TxDOT's international visitors.

Design (DES)

The Design division has contributed to TxDOT's international exchanges by sharing design criteria with international visitors or information seekers. Such exchanges take the form of personal interviews, group presentations, and sometimes conjoint presentations with transportation research centers such as the Center for Transportation Research (CTR) and Texas Transportation Institute. This division also provides staff support to the BTEP on an as-needed basis.

Environmental Affairs (ENV)



During an excavation of an archeological site

The Environmental Affairs Division's involvement in the international arena includes:

- Involvement in special study requirements for archaeological investigations where foreign laboratories must be used.
- Cooperation and exchange of information between archaeological laboratories.
- Excavation of archaeological sites of international importance.

In 2006, ENV's Air Quality Specialist coordinated with TTI on a border research grant proposal for El Paso international truck crossings and air emissions. This project is now underway.



The ENV shares expertise with a group of young Japanese professionals

Motor Carrier (MCD)



MCD staff members participate in informational seminars and transportation fairs related to cross border trucking, briefings for international visitors, and NAFTA-related issues. MCD is a voting member of the Western Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (WASHTO) Committee on Highway Transport, a committee that promotes uniform laws, regulations, and practices among jurisdictions for the efficient and safe movement of goods and services. These laws impact Canadian and Mexican truck uniformity. The committee meets twice a year.

MCD oversees rules for commercial motor carrier registration and insurance requirements under Texas Transportation Code, Chapter 643, and Single State Registration under the Texas Transportation Code, Chapter 645, which applies to international motor carriers operating in Texas. MCD provides public assistance (including assistance in Spanish), conducts field audits, and administers complaint resolutions related to motor carriers operating in Texas. The administration of these responsibilities by MCD affects international motor carriers operating in Texas. The forms related to the Single State Registration Program are available in Spanish upon request.

MCD is also responsible for administering Texas' oversize/overweight permit program under the Texas Transportation Code, Chapter 623. These requirements impact Mexican-based carriers transporting oversized or overweight loads into Texas.



Beginning in 2007, MCD began operating a Spanish queue on the MCD 800 phone system to better serve Spanish speaking customers. People are able to call into the toll free MCD 800 phone system and ask questions and receive answers in Spanish. This year they received approximately 6,600 Spanish speaking calls.

In addition, the division has a web site that includes a Mexican-based Commercial Motor Carriers Vehicle Checklist and a link to the department's *International Motor Carriers Frequently Asked Questions* list. The web site address is:
http://www.txdot.gov/services/motor_carrier/checklist.htm

MCD hosted international visitors in 2007. A group of visitors were Transportation Commissioners from the Province of Shanxi in China. The group toured MCD facilities and were given an overview of MCD functions and operations. The group showed a keen interest in overweight/oversize regulation. An Israeli professor also visited, receiving a tour of the facilities and an overview of MCD's programs.

Research and Technology Implementation (RTI)

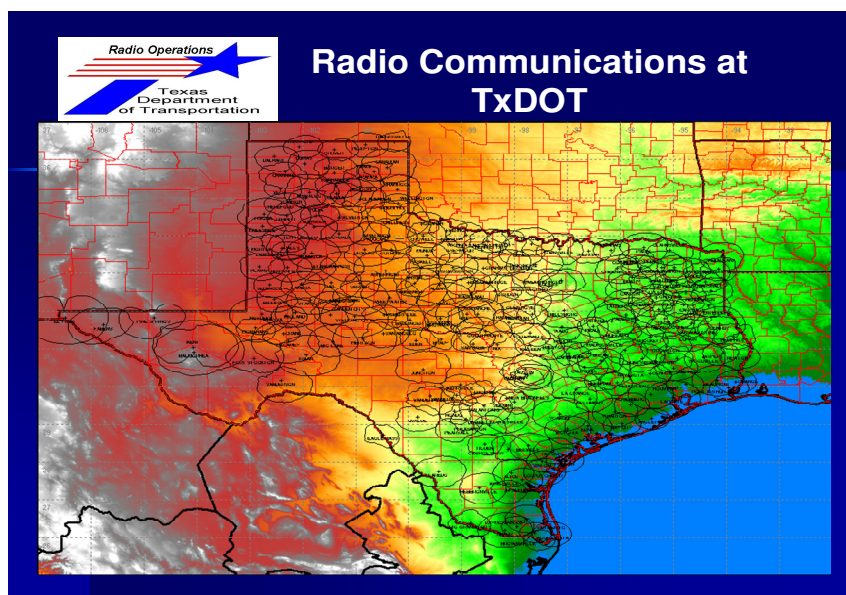
The Research and Technology Implementation Office (RTI) administers the federal Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP). TxDOT contracts with the Texas A&M University System's Engineering Extension Service for the program. LTAP program administrators are available to meet with counterparts in Mexico to advise and coordinate activities. During the annual LTAP and TTAP (Tribal Technical Assistance Program) meeting, RTI's LTAP Implementation Director meets with international representatives from several foreign countries to exchange ideas and discuss various transportation issues. Additionally, courses on safety, signage, marking, and pavement management are now available to Mexican nationals. There is no charge for attending and classes can be made available in Spanish.

RTI also oversees transportation research done at state universities in Texas in response to the needs of the Department. This often involves movements and coordination of activities along or crossing the border with Mexico. One example of this process is research project 0-5985, "Evaluating Mexican Transportation Planning Processes and Implications for Texas Transportation Assets." This project is intended to help TxDOT understand the legal basis, protocols and strategies used by Mexican governmental bodies in developing and maintaining its transportation assets. It will evaluate the current extent of Texas-Mexico coordination in transportation planning, develop strategies for improving this coordination, and demonstrate how major transportation improvements currently envisioned in Mexico may impact TxDOT planning decisions. Members of the research team have travelled to Mexico to meet with appropriate government professionals and to assess transportation projects likely to impact Texas' transportation system. The work is wholeheartedly welcomed by our colleagues in Mexico as an opportunity to strengthen and expand ties.

Other on-going research that has or will have an international, particularly Mexican, component includes:

- 0-5973, “Emerging Trade Corridors and Texas Transportation Planning;”
- 0-6095, “Longer Combination Vehicles & Road Trains for Texas?”
- 0-6515, “Strategic Freight Transportation Corridors for Texas;” and
- 0-6544, “Appraisal of Available Analytical Tools to Assess Environmental Justice Impacts of Toll Road Projects.”

Traffic Operations (TRF)



Radio Communications at TxDOT

The TRF Division continues to participate in a number of groups, organizations and committees with substantial international memberships. These include the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITSA), the Transportation Research Board (TRB) and the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE).



The division has assisted in the development of ITS related projects in El Paso, Del Rio, Laredo, and the Lower Rio Grande Valley in conjunction with the districts. These systems can be used to alert motorists to delays that may be occurring at border crossings and other border-related issues and support border-related commercial vehicle operations. International visitors show a keen interest in this technology when visiting TxDOT.

The division is working with the Maintenance Division and DPS in the development of the eight BSIFs. TRF is assisting in the design and implementation of ITS components and systems for these sites.

Additionally, the division has researched and deployed various signage initiatives for the Texas-Mexico border region including warning signs and bilingual signs.

Transportation Planning and Programming (TPP)



The TPP Division has two major responsibilities relating to international affairs. TPP has the lead responsibility for the state international bridge application process as required by the Texas Transportation Code. Statute allows an applicant to concurrently seek approval from the Texas Transportation Commission and the USDOS. However, if the commission does not approve the construction of the bridge, the applicant shall withdraw the request for approval from the United States.

Secondly, TPP serves as the lead in coordinating four different reports required by state legislation relating to international trade. The reports which TPP is responsible for producing for various members of the legislator are the Trade Transportation Activities Report, the International Trade Corridor Plan, the Border Trade Advisory Committee Report, and the Cross-Border Transportation and Infrastructure Report. These reports can all be found on TxDOT's web site:

http://www.txdot.gov/txdot_library/publications/government/transportation/default.htm.

The Trade Transportation Activities Report is required by the General Appropriations Act and is due annually. The report is due to the border district legislators, to the respective metropolitan planning organizations, the Governor and the Legislative Budget Board. The report includes trade activities in which TxDOT is involved along the border. Some of these activities include pass-through financing projects, freight rail studies, the Coordinated Border Infrastructure Program, border safety inspection facilities and the La Entrada al Pacifico Corridor Feasibility Study.

The International Trade Corridor Plan is required by the Texas Transportation Code and is due biennially. The report is due to the presiding officer of each house of the Legislature. The purpose of the report is to include strategies and projects to aid the exchange of international trade, assign priorities based on the amount of international trade using the multiple transportation modes in the state, and address implementation of the recommendations of the Border Trade Advisory Committee. The report provides information on Texas international transportation infrastructure, the volume, value and weight of international trade entering Texas either by land or water, and Texas' international trade corridors.

The Border Trade Advisory Committee is established in the Texas Transportation Code. The Texas Transportation Commission appoints the members of the committee and the Border Commerce Coordinator serves as the presiding officer. The committee's recommendations are provided to the commission and the Governor biennially. Four main goals were identified by the committee in 2006 for Texas to focus its attention and efforts. These goals are:

- Trade Transportation Corridors
- Coordination with Mexico
- Safety and Security Measures
- Economic Benefits of International Trade

The Texas Transportation Code requires the department to initiate efforts to meet at least quarterly with our counterparts in Mexico. However, these Cross-Border Transportation and Infrastructure meetings take place on an on-going basis between TxDOT district representatives, Mexican counterparts from state and federal transportation agencies, and U.S. and Mexican private sector bridge operators and truck carriers. The subjects of these meetings are discussed in more detail in the section of this report relating to the El Paso District, the Laredo District and the Pharr District. Recommendations from these meetings are updated in a report biennially and provided to the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the House of Representatives and each member of the legislature. Information on these meetings and recommendations are documented in the International Activities Report and the Border Trade Advisory Committee report.

Coordinated Border Infrastructure Program (CBI)

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users revised the Coordinated Border Infrastructure Program. Funding for this program is intended to facilitate and expedite cross-border motor vehicle and cargo movements. Border crossing infrastructure, highway and safety enforcement facilities, electronic data exchange, and international coordination of transportation planning qualify for this program.

The commission allocated \$200 million to the three border districts in March of 2006. The amounts allocated per district are:

- El Paso district \$53,575,843 (four projects have been identified in the amount of \$46,034,992; two are scheduled to be let in 2009.)
- Laredo district \$81,867,221 (eleven projects have been identified, three have been let and seven are scheduled to be let in 2009.)
- Pharr district \$64,556,936 (fourteen projects have been identified in the amount of \$64,556,936, six projects have been let and three are scheduled for 2009.)
- Because most of the border crossings are within metropolitan planning area boundaries, the districts have coordinated project selection with the MPOs.

Travel (TRV)



The Travel division publishes monthly editions of *Texas Highways*, the official travel magazine of Texas. The publication encourages recreational travel to and within the state and tells Texas stories to readers around the world. Currently, the magazine has 1,351 international paid subscribers among its readership with magazines going to 62 countries. *Texas Highways* can also be found at the website address <http://www.texashighways.com>.

Through *Texas Highways*, TxDOT has been an active member of the International Regional Magazine Association (IRMA) since 1977. IRMA membership consists of regional magazines similar to *Texas Highways* from all over the United States, Ireland and Canada.

In Fiscal Year 2007, travel literature packets containing the *Texas State Travel Guide*, *Texas Accommodations Guide*, and *Texas Official Travel Map* were mailed to 8,024 international requesters, including 6,350 in Canada and 1,157 in Mexico.



TxDOT's litter prevention programs, which are managed by the Travel Information Division, have received international attention. People from around the world inquire about the department's famous "Don't Mess with Texas" public awareness campaign.

The other Texas born litter prevention program, "Adopt-a-Highway," allows individuals, families, members or employees of civic and nonprofit organizations, businesses, and governmental entities to participate in removing litter from state highways. Since the introduction of this program in the 1980s, visitors from China, the United Kingdom, Japan, Mexico, Switzerland and South Africa have approached TRV to learn about litter prevention and starting similar programs in their countries. Organizations seeking more information can access the following websites:

<http://www.dontmesswithtexas.org/>

or

www.texasadoptahighway.org

Vehicle Titles and Registration (VTR)



VTR's El Paso Regional Office met monthly with the International Liaison Committee to discuss stolen vehicle activity and other issues along our border. The committee is made up of law enforcement from Texas and Mexico, National Insurance Crime Bureau, U.S./Mexico Customs, and other support groups. They provided training on fraudulent title and registration documents, security features on certificates of title, title and registration procedures such as information on assigned numbers, Texas importation policies, etc.

A new Mexican import law affected licensed dealers along the Texas border by restricting importation of used motor vehicles into Mexico that are 10 years old or older, and increased import fees for the Mexican importer. VTR effectively managed assisting the impacted dealers in handling the relevant elements of the new law.

VTR also provided support to the Mexican trucking industry by responding to inquiries about commercial vehicle registration, regulatory authority, temporary permits, legal movements of oversize vehicles, and upcoming changes to their industry. NAFTA annual permits increased to a total of 2,313 permits in CY 2008 and as of July 2008, there were 480 Mexican companies involved in the El Paso/Ciudad Juarez border commercial zone.

In September of 2007, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) granted authority to designated Mexican motor carriers to operate beyond the United States (US) commercial zones of the four states along the US-Mexico border. The operating authority for these motor carriers was granted under the auspices of FMCSA's Demonstration Project. The project was intended to allow no more than 100 Mexican motor carriers to travel beyond the approximately 25 mile commercial zone that runs along the borders of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. The project was initially scheduled for one year.

The El Paso Regional Office approved and issued apportion credentials to three Mexican carriers certified by FMCSA to operate under the NAFTA Demonstration Project. The Region provided carrier guidance in Spanish, including translated forms, records maintenance training, and getting licensed for U.S. operation.

In October of 2008, VTR submitted the extension proposal for the Border Enforcement Grant for Texas International Registration Plan Activities to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to fund Texas' participation in the Demonstration Project. This project involves the hosting of Mexican based motor carriers for inter-jurisdictional travel within states that participate in the International Registration Plan. At the time of writing of this report, however, the pilot has been halted by the U.S. Congress.

This regional office also met with DPS to discuss current changes in TxDOT program such as, NAFTA Demonstration Project, e-Tags, and various border crossing issues such as foreign commercial carriers. They responded to requests for assistance from law enforcement in various Mexican States. Nine entities were provided written confirmation and clarifications in Spanish on title and registration issues.

In collaboration with Recaudación de Rentas department in the state of Chihuahua; TxDOT is being notified when a vehicle from the U.S. is registered in Mexico. Once registered in Mexico, the license plates are removed and destroyed. VTR in turn places a "Surrendered to MX" remark in VTR's database. This program was recently initiated by the State of Chihuahua due to the number of crimes being committed with unauthorized Texas license plates. This only affects Texas registration records.

The division is committed to providing publications in Spanish to meet the needs of the Mexican transportation industry. The list of available forms can be found in the Appendix 3 of this report.

As of 2009, reports will become available from the Texas Regional Offices that identify the number of Spanish speakers helped in each of the regional offices.

SECTION II

COMMITTEES, CONFERENCES AND ORGANIZATIONS

ABTPA Border Solutions Committee (ABTPA BSC)

Description: The Border Solutions Committee (BSC) was established in 1992 by the ABTPA to study and recommend auto theft initiatives and trends along the 1,250 miles of the Texas and Mexico border.

Participants: The committee is composed of local, state, and federal representatives from the U.S. and Mexico.

Purpose: The Border Solutions Committee advises the ABTPA on issues affecting the auto theft rate along the Texas-Mexico border, including ways to facilitate the location, recovery and return of vehicles from both sides of the border. The committee also recommends to the ABTPA Board, for possible funding, bi-national mutually beneficial projects to combat motor vehicle theft along the border. The work of ABTPA directly supports the TxDOT goal of enhancing safety.

Initiatives:

- Learned New Technology Trends from the Oficina Coordinadora de Riesgos Asegurados (Coordinated Risk Assessment Office of Mexico)
- Updated information from Border Auto Theft Information Center & Border Partners Program
- Incorporated License Plate Reader Program Information

Meetings: Meetings occur once or twice yearly. During meetings, committee members provide updates of auto theft trends affecting their areas in Texas and Mexico. Representatives discuss the relationship with U.S. law enforcement and special operations to combat auto theft.

Benefits: The BSC provides an outstanding vehicle for maintaining communication, cooperation and positive working relationships between authorities from Mexico and the United States. It also allows for dissemination of information and sharing of ideas on how to deal with stolen vehicles.

Border Governors' Conference (BGC)

Description: Governors of the ten U.S.-Mexican Border States meet once a year to discuss topics of mutual interest and concern. Work groups at the conference include: Agriculture, Logistics and International Crossings, Economic Development, Education, Environment, Energy, Health, Tourism, North American Development Bank, Water for Sustainable Development and Border Security.

The members of the various work tables meet during the year to develop recommendations and follow up on action plans. From this input, a joint declaration is developed and delivered to federal and state governmental entities and presidents of both countries.

Participants: Include border governors, representatives from each of the border governors' offices, and state delegates for each of the work tables. Federal government representatives are invited as observers. TxDOT's IR section Director sits on the Logistics and International Crossings worktable and coordinates department input on border crossing and transportation issues.

Purpose: To provide a forum that enables the ten border governors and interested entities to develop personal relationships, address issues and opportunities at the border, and to promote initiatives for improving the quality of life of the people in the region.

Objectives of the conference are:

- To encourage and strengthen personal relationships between the Border States.
- To promote unified action along the U.S.-Mexico border and on international issues.
- To address border problems and opportunities.
- To jointly promote development throughout the border region.

Meetings: The conference is held annually and this year was held in the summer in Hollywood, California. The Logistics and Border Crossings worktable additionally met various times during the year to develop recommendations and action plans.

Benefits: This forum provides TxDOT with an opportunity to work closely with the Governor's Office and the Secretary of State's Office in establishing coordinated activities related to border transportation. The conference also promotes coordination with neighboring states in making recommendations regarding the border area.

For more information on this group's workings, please visit: <http://www.bordergovernors.ca.gov/>

Border Trade Advisory Committee (BTAC)

Purpose: The BTAC was created in 2001 by the 77th Texas Legislature to define and develop a strategy and make recommendations to the commission and the governor for addressing the highest priority border trade transportation challenges. The 79th Texas Legislature in 2005 (Senate Bill 183) provided additional guidance to the commission with regard to the composition of the BTAC. The commission appointed 29 members to the BTAC in June 2006 with the border commerce coordinator serving as the presiding officer.

Participants: Members of the BTAC include the border commerce coordinator, representatives from the MPOs located along the border, each port of entry, universities that conduct research on transportation or trade issues, and local officials.

Meetings: The BTAC met once in 2008, and developed ten principles as the initial items that would be part of the recommendations (not in priority order):

- Promote ample and expandable transportation trade corridors
- Effectively coordinate with Mexico to ensure through-trade corridors
- Promote efficiencies at the border
- Demonstrate statewide, national, and international benefits of trade
- Optimize operations
- Develop ports of entry for use of new technologies
- Support improvements to the Presidential Permit process
- Look for policies to facilitate trade at both state and federal levels
- Promote cooperation and understanding of policies with Mexico
- Leverage safety and security measures to enhance trade efficiency

The 10 principles were consolidated into 4 categories:

- Trade Corridors
- Coordination with Mexico
- Security Measures
- Benefits of International Commerce

The BTAC then proposed strategies, implementation actions, measures of success, and the responsible parties (at the federal, state, and local levels) for each category. These were presented to and accepted by the commission in November 2006. The recommendations were then submitted to the governor and incorporated into the International Trade Corridor Plan. Another progress report was in 2008, detailing the progress made toward achieving the above objectives.

Benefits

The benefit of the BTAC is increased coordinated planning on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Please see Appendix 2 for more information on the successes of this group's endeavors.

Interagency Work Group on Border Issues and the Texas Mexico Strategic Investment Commission (SIC)

Description: These two groups were created by Senate Bill 925 of the 79th Legislature.

Participants: The Border Commerce Coordinator, currently the Secretary of State, chairs both groups. Representatives from some 20 different state agencies that have dealings with the border area and Mexico participate in the Interagency Work Group. The SIC includes the head or designee of the Texas Water Development Board, State Health Services, the Railroad Commission, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and TxDOT. The International Relations Section Director is the TxDOT designee for this Commission.

Purpose: The Interagency group was created for three primary purposes:

- To develop or update a process to allow agencies to work together on issues that face border communities,
- To discuss and coordinate programs and services offered to border communities, and
- To develop regulatory and legislative recommendations to eliminate duplication and combine program services.

The SIC was created to:

- Study issues pertaining to improving cooperation and coordination at the border,
- Study trade issues and the flow of commerce at the border, and
- Work with federal officials to improve infrastructure, processes and truck movements at the border.

Meetings: These groups meet about once a year. The Border Commerce Coordinator compiles a report on the activities of the agencies which is available on the SOS website:

Benefits: The groups have served to keep the agencies advised of the initiatives and programs relating to Mexico and the border, and have assisted the SOS in compiling information on projects and programs dealing with the border.

Joint Working Committee (JWC)



Description: The JWC is a bi-national group whose primary focus is to cooperate on land transportation planning and the facilitation of efficient, safe, and economical cross-border transportation movements at the US-Mexico border. Due to further development of economic and commercial relations associated with NAFTA, the United States and Mexico recognized the need for a well-coordinated transportation planning process along the border. More information about the JWC is available at:

<http://www.borderplanning.fhwa.dot.gov/mexico.asp>

Participants: The US Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the State Department (DOS), the SCT, the Ministry of Foreign Relations (SRE), and the border state transportation departments from both countries.

In addition the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP), as well as Mexico's Institute of Administration and Valuation of National Goods (INDAABIN, Mexico's GSA counterpart) and Mexican Customs (Aduanas México) now participate.

Purpose: The JWC promotes effective communication concerning transportation planning between U.S.-Mexico Border States and works to develop a well-coordinated land transportation planning process along the border. It fosters a candid and open exchange of information and ideas which takes place on a regular basis, and problem solving and information gathering between agencies is much easier because of established relationships.

Goals: The JWC Strategic Plan, written this past year, contains four strategic goals for border infrastructure which align very closely with TxDOT Strategic Goals. They are:

JWC Goals	TxDOT Goals
Relieve Congestion	Reduce congestion
Enhance Safety and Security	Enhance safety
Improve Global Competitiveness	Expand economic opportunity
Ensure Sustainability	Improve air quality
	Increase value of transportation assets

TxDOT participates in many of the projects in the two-year JWC work plans that include border related transportation studies and workshops. Information on the Strategic Plan, Work Plan, studies and other issues is available at the web site noted above.

Meetings: The JWC meets twice a year alternating meeting locations between the U.S. and Mexico.

Benefits: The JWC is the only U.S.-Mexico border-wide planning work group.

Motor Carrier NAFTA Task Force

Description: The Motor Carrier NAFTA task force operates under the auspices of the Base State Working Group as provided for under Title IV, Motor Carrier Act, Section 4008, Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991.

Participants: The task force consists of representatives from Arizona, California, Maine, Montana, New Mexico, Texas and Utah. There are also representatives from FHWA, the National Conference on State Legislatures, the IRP, HELP, Inc., the American Trucking Associations, the National Governors' Association and the International Fuel Tax Agreement. The Director of TxDOT's VTR Division represents Texas on the task force.

Purpose: According to Section 4008 of ISTEA, the task force was established for the purpose of:

“Proposing procedures for resolving disputes among states participating in the International Registration Plan and among states participating in the International Fuel Tax Agreement, including designation of the DOT, or any other person for resolving such disputes;” and, “Providing technical assistance to states participating or seeking to participate in the plan or in the agreement.”

Meetings: Annually

Benefits: This task force is an effective forum for addressing the fundamental differences in motor carrier operations among U.S. and Mexican states and Canadian provinces.

Currently, a three phase approach is being planned to enable Mexico to participate in the IRP program:

- The immediate issuance of NAFTA permits,
- The four border states (Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas) would serve as base jurisdictions for Mexican carriers, and ultimately, and
- Mexico formally joins the IRP and IFTA.

US-MX Bi-national Bridges and Border Crossings Group

Description: This group focuses on proposed international bridges and border crossings, the status/needs of current border crossings facilities and transportation access. There are a total of 26 international bridges and border crossings connecting Texas and Mexico, which share 1,254.7 miles of common border.

Participants: Formed in 1981, the group is composed of delegations from the federal and state governments of the United States and Mexico. The U.S. Department of State's Coordinator for U.S.-Mexico Border Affairs chairs the U.S. delegation, while the SRE Director for North American Affairs chairs the Mexican delegation. U.S. and Mexico border state representatives have been included in the sessions since 1994. The IR represents TxDOT on the group.

Purpose: To discuss proposed bridges and border crossings and their related infrastructure and to exchange technical information so that those projects, which both federal governments deem beneficial, may complete the approval process of the two respective governments. Related issues such as toll roads and other infrastructure projects are discussed, as well as operational matters involving existing and future crossings.

Meetings: The group meets twice a year. Meetings include participation of the U.S. and Mexican delegations composed of representatives from federal and state agencies that have an interest in/or responsibility for bilateral relations and permitting of new crossings (international ports of entry). Issues discussed include:

- Status of Permits
- Feasibility and prioritization of projects
- Inspections
- Highway/rail access
- Development and construction of facilities
- Environmental Issues
- Monitoring of the international boundary
- Border Security and Inspection Facilities

The meetings include a U.S.-only and a Mexico-only meeting followed by three bi-national sessions over a three-day period. During the public sessions, sponsors of the proposed bridges and border crossings (and related infrastructure projects) make presentations, in which the U.S. and Mexican delegations can query the presenters. During the technical sessions, the delegations meet to discuss specific border crossings and exchange views and technical information. Reports of bi-national committees' activities and major programs that directly impact the U.S.-Mexico border area are made. Each U.S. and Mexican border state representative offers a presentation on the development of current transportation infrastructure projects. The final session is a plenary at which positions are summarized by the two delegations. The group also conducts periodic "border walks", alternating between the U.S. and Mexico.

Benefits: This group allows state participation in all sessions of the U.S. delegation, the value of which is twofold. Firstly, state DOT representatives can provide input to which the government delegation members might not be privy. Such project-specific information should be considered in advancing proposed bridge and crossing projects through approval processes. In addition, the information that state DOTs glean from the closed technical session assists those agencies in transportation infrastructure development planning. Texas plays a key role in this forum as it is the only border state that requires a state border crossings permit in conjunction with the issuing of a U.S. Presidential Permit.

Note: Details regarding the border crossings are available in the International Relations publication *Texas-Mexico International Bridges and Border Crossings: Existing and Proposed*, available at: http://www.txdot.gov/txdot_library/publications/government/international_relations.htm

SECTION III APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Factors Considered in the Presidential Permitting Process

The facility's potential impacts on the economy of the region, the environment, traffic congestion and mobility, and the flow of free trade.

- The anticipated financial condition of the application and the project.
- Any written commitments from Mexican authorities to provide adequate roadway connections to the bridge.
- The impact of a competing bridge, whether proposed, approved or constructed.
- Whether the bridge construction is consistent with the state and regional transportation plans.
- Whether the future transportation infrastructure on both sides of the border, at the time the bridge becomes operational, will be of sufficient capacity to support the new structure.
- Whether the revenue generated by the bridge will be sufficient to finance the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the bridge.
- Whether there is support on the Mexican side for the necessary transportation infrastructure.

In making its determination, the department consults with the following agencies/offices:

- Texas Department of Public Safety
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Texas Historical Commission
- Texas Department of Agriculture
- Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission
- Office of the Governor
- Other agencies the department deems appropriate
- Any entity which will be significantly affected by the project

Appendix 2

Border Trade Advisory Committee: Successes and Challenges

Some of the challenges the committee identified in meeting their goals are listed here:

- Proper infrastructure planning on both sides of the border needs to exist in order to ensure common goals are met.
- There is a need for more binational traffic studies at potential ports of entry.
- Staffing at border crossing inspection facilities on the U.S. side is inadequate, specifically at the federal level.

Successes achieved by the committee include:

- Coordination efforts between the state of Texas, the state of Tamaulipas, and the Kansas City Southern Railway are ongoing to construct a new international bridge crossing in Laredo.
- Planning efforts between the TxDOT Laredo district and the state of Nuevo Leon are taking place with an eye to building infrastructure between Monterrey, Laredo and the Port of Corpus.
- Stakeholders in the El Paso area have set up an interagency ad hoc committee that is designed to improve border crossing operations.
- Two separate studies are aimed at automatically and accurately collecting border crossing times for commercial freight.
- Regional Border Master Plans to be carried out in the Laredo district.

The committee agreed to support an effort by the Mexican Automotive Dealers Association which was causing a problem for both countries. The committee decided:

The members of the Border Trade Advisory Committee are willing to collaborate with the Mexican Automotive Dealers Associations, as well as to petition the pertinent authorities and parties when outside of their scope, the following points:

- *SAFETY - exchange information between the appropriate parties to avoid stolen cars from crossing the border in either direction (north and south bound).*
- *ENVIRONMENT - exchange information and advance efforts to coordinate inspections of vehicles, so that vehicles that do not meet the standards to circulate in the U.S. are not allowed to circulate in Mexico either.*
- *TRADE - exchange information and data regarding vehicle sales, imports and exports along the border.*

Appendix 3

Forms Available in Spanish from the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division

- Form VTR-29, Texas NAFTA Annual Permit Application
- Form VTR-136 County of Title Issuance
- Form VTR-453, Salvage Motor Vehicle Dealers & Agents FAQs
- VTR-453-S, Comerciantes y Agentes de Vehículo Chocado, Preguntas Frecuentes
- Form VTR-901, Buyer's Certification of Export-Only Sale
- Form VTR-901-A, Annual Buyer's Certification of Export-Only Sale
- Form VTR-930-1, Certification of Texas Title Information
- Form VTR-930-2, Certification of Title in Process
- Book 81, General Information on NAFTA and Cross Border Traffic
- Summary of Informal Paired City Agreements with the Mexican states of Coahuila and Chihuahua and the Bilateral Understanding with the Mexican state of Tamaulipas